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MODERN METHODS IN TEACHING

(Prof. Frank McMurry of Columbia University.)

The principles of how to teach are based on how to study. One must have learned the latter before he can attempt the former. In teaching the Bible the first question asked is, "What results can we hope for?" There are several: first, a familiar attitude toward the Bible, and a strong liking for favorite passages one has learned and that one likes to turn to for pleasure and comfort as well as for pure enjoyment; second, a knowledge of the Bible itself, not only of the stories and characters it contains, but something of the history of the people it represents and something of the way in which it came into being; third, some personal religious convictions.

The first result, a familiar attitude toward the Bible, is difficult to attain. Too often one receives a healthy dislike of the Bible as the result of curriculum Bible study. To get any affection for the Bible, or for any book, we must first realize that our instruction should lead into the book and not away from it.

It is essential that one have breadth and scope to the topics which he discusses in class. A smattering of stories or a few selections here and there do not lead to a real familiarity with or liking for the Bible. Let us keep away from fragments and not deal with isolated phrases or chapters. This method, as in the old way of teaching geography, has led to much failure. Modern geography is taught so as to show the pupil the world as a whole and to know its relationships. The location of isolated bays, rivers and mountains is not geography. One should see and grasp the whole. Applying this to Bible study, let us endeavor to present whole stories, whole characters, whole books.

Second, one should attempt to relate the stories to the lives of his pupils. This should be the starting point. Drawing an analogy again with geography, let us assume that the topic under discussion is Alaska. Instead of looking at Alaska as a piece of land with certain shape, with so many thousand square miles, so many rivers and mountains, let us assume that we are invited to visit Alaska. Would we want to go? If so, why? What would we expect to see there?

Or again, let us take an analogy from the teaching of history. The War of 1812 is too often taught as simply a collection of Acts of Congress and a list of battles. It would seem difficult to relate the Embargo and Non-Intercourse Acts with everyday life, and yet the first suggestion of many at the sinking of the *Lusitania* was this very suggestion of Congress in 1812, that to avoid trouble we should refrain from sailing on the high seas. Any student of history who has read the history of the War of 1812 intelligently realizes that this experiment has been tried and has been proved an utter failure.

Third, be sure that the subjects one teaches have some worth which can be recognized. This is true in history as well as in business. Why should we teach material which is of no intrinsic value whatever, except as a mere collection of facts? Young people are quick to condemn the practice of attempting to make important material which is comparatively worthless.

The starting point is all important. In the study of Matthew, for instance, one might ask the question, "How did Christ select a school or a small college offering a three year course? He allowed but thirteen men to enter the course. Is this democracy? Did he choose men who could pass the best examinations? How did He teach them? What was His attitude toward children?" The most casual observation of His methods proves the points we have raised. Christ saw things as a whole and taught them as a whole. He did not waste time in running down details and unimportant incidents.

Oral reading in the study of the Bible is excellent practice. Contests in good reading encourage students to enunciate clearly and to visualize distinctly the words they are reading.

It is a fair question whether it is advisable to memorize things we have not learned to enjoy. Shall we insist that boys enjoy the material given them before we invite them to memorize it? Mere memorizing is often characterized as brutal, but it is proved that memorizing is nourishment for little children, providing we choose material that will nourish, and it is possible to select that material which they will enjoy

when it is memorized almost unconsciously. The teacher should go into every class with the idea, "What have I got that is nourishing or worth while?"—not merely with a list of facts to be gone over.

CONNECTING THE COLLEGE BIBLICAL WORK WITH THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

(Prof. George Dahl of Yale School of Religion.)

When asked for an opinion concerning the Biblical work done in colleges, one theological professor says: "The toy courses offered are of almost no value." A professor of Church History complains that he is unable to proceed with the teaching of his subject because the New Testament is an unknown book to his students, graduates of colleges; it is necessary for him to give first of all a course of readings in the Bible. My own experience with entering theological students has convinced me that even for the men who have taken Biblical courses in college the Old Testament is mysterious and unexplored ground. This ignorance of the Bible is astounding and tragic. No wonder, then, that the attitude of theological faculties toward college work in Bible is somewhat sceptical and tends even to become cynical.

To be sure, very few of the men in our theological schools come from the institutions represented here—the worse for our larger colleges and the ministry! The majority of our students come from smaller institutions, in some of which the Bible departments are most inadequately manned and equipped. And yet the few graduates of larger colleges who find their way into theological seminaries seem to know precious little about the Bible. May it not be that, from the standpoint of preparing men for the ministry at least, there are inherent defects and weaknesses in college courses as usually outlined?

In view of the tremendous tasks laid upon theological seminaries in preparing men for service in the present age, the unfortunate conditions I have indicated are of considerable importance. Theological education has increased vastly in variety and scope. Provision must be made not only for training men for the pastorate, but also for the allied fields